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NEHEMIAH AND HIS WORK.

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OUR knowledge of the work and character of Nehemiah is derived from his own memoirs. These appear to have been written not long after his second visit to Judea. They, therefore, furnish us with a practically contemporaneous account of events and personalities at a most interesting epoch in Jewish history. Moreover, the narrator is an eyewitness of what he records, a participant in the events, the chief actor in every situation portrayed, and quite the most fascinating and masterful character his nation produced at the time. The importance of these facts cannot easily be overestimated.

It is true that we do not possess these memoirs in their original form. Our present Hebrew text is far from being Nehemiah's autograph. It is a very late copy, and here and there unquestionably corrupt. The earliest Greek version seems to be lost, and it is doubtful whether it can be even approximately restored without the accession of new material. We owe the preservation of the work to the chronicler. But he has not given us the memoirs in their entirety, and the excerpts made have not been left altogether untouched by his own hand. It is difficult in some places to determine whether we are reading Nehemiah or the chronicler. This latter writer enjoys no enviable reputation as a historian, and may have more or less unconsciously imitated Nehemiah's style, even to the extent of using the first personal pronoun. In regard to the sections that undoubtedly flowed from Nehemiah's pen, allowance must everywhere be made for the personal bias of the writer. His passionate temper, his easily aroused suspicions, his narrow zeal, and his political prepossessions may indeed have led him to present in a wrong light the persons with whom he came into contact and the events that occurred.

Yet, after all, the Massoretic text probably gives us in the main a fairly correct impression of what Nehemiah wrote in those parts of his work that have come down to us. A closer study of the ancient versions, a more highly developed critical instinct, and an enlargement by new discoveries of our critical apparatus, may improve the text and render it in not unimportant details more nearly what it originally was; but substantially it will no doubt remain what it is today. The authenticity of Nehemiah, chaps. 1, 2, 4, 5: 1-13, 6, is universally acknowledged. In chap. 3 the hand of the chronicler is occasionally visible. It is difficult to escape the impression that 3: 33-38 (in Heb., in the Eng. 4: 1-6) was written by him. There is nothing that absolutely prevents the list in 3: 1-32 from having formed a part of the original memoirs. It has the appearance, however, of being a later insertion. The possibility is not precluded that it represents a tolerably reliable tradition as to the persons who took a leading part in the reparation of the wall. In chaps. 7 and 12 there are passages where the first person is used. These have been generally assumed to be extracts from the memoirs. While it is difficult to frame a theory accounting for these brief quotations, the sudden change of person in the midst of a continuous narrative is at least equally perplexing. Fortunately, nothing of great importance depends on this question.

The reverse is true of chap. 13. If, as Professor Torrey¹ maintains, this chapter is entirely the work of the chronicler, there would be no evidence of Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem and of some of the incidents that throw the clearest light on his character. But the arguments adduced are not convincing. Vss. 1-3 are, indeed, the chronicler's property, and his hand may have retouched some of the following verses. But in the main the style is unmistakably that of Nehemiah, and these lifelike sketches are not in the chronicler's vein. It is not necessary to suppose that Nehemiah wrote his memoirs immediately upon his return from the first visit to Jerusalem, and then added chap. 13 twelve years later as an appendix. It is more

¹ C. C. TORREY, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah* (Gies-sen, 1896), pp. 44 ff.

likely that he composed this work after his last return to the Persian court, not as a report to his superiors of what he had accomplished, but rather as a memorandum to assure his own heart, to bear testimony to his co-religionists of his zeal, and to remind his god of the great services he had rendered. Chap. 5: 14 ff. is more doubtful. Nehemiah may have driven away Manasseh in 373 B. C., and yet a generation have elapsed before the temple was finally built on Mount Gerizim. There had no doubt been some sort of a shrine on that mountain from immemorial times, and a worshiping community at Shechem long before Jehoiada's son took up his abode there. The development of the Samaritan sect may have been a much simpler affair than is ordinarily conceived. It is not altogether easy to get out of the spell of the chronicler. Even Professor Torrey speaks solemnly of "the founding of the Samaritan church," though he wisely shrugs his shoulders at the fine descriptions of how the Jewish church was founded, or reconstituted. If it really is the chronicler "who is getting in a stab at the new sect" in 13: 28, it is strange that he does not cut a little deeper. Nothing would prevent a plainer reference to the Shechemite temple but a knowledge that Nehemiah had passed away before the building of this temple. But if this was the case, there is of course nothing to preclude the assumption that Nehemiah wrote the verse himself, and only meant to stigmatize the entangling alliances of the high-priestly family, by marriage and otherwise, with powerful foreign chiefs as a desecration of the holy office. It seems to me certain that the substance, at any rate, of the narratives in chap. 13 was drawn from the memoirs of Nehemiah.

Whatever may have been the idiosyncrasies of the chronicler as a historian, his long quotations from Samuel and Kings, where we are in a position to control him, show that he can be fairly trusted as a copyist. Besides, the style of the chapters that appear to have belonged to the memoirs is very different from that of the chronicler, and the same holds true of the historical perspective and the religious attitude. The individuality of Nehemiah is so marked that it is comparatively easy to

eliminate the subjective element and to form an independent judgment of the men and occurrences he so graphically depicts. His very peculiarities reveal a character that vouches for the substantial accuracy of what he relates. Such a man as he cannot imagine facts, though he may be fanciful in the interpretation of them. We may differ from him in our judgment, but we can depend on it that what so deeply stirs his righteous wrath is not a creation of his own brain, but a stubborn external reality.

The memoirs are written in a sober, orderly, matter-of-fact manner. Nehemiah informs his readers when the events took place that he records. He describes the occasion that led him to request the privilege of visiting Jerusalem. He indicates what authority was given him. Very vividly he details the work done by him in rebuilding the wall, the opposition from without, the disturbing factors within, the successful completion of the task. Then he relates the story of his return after many years, the ejection of Tobia and the restoration of the Levites, the enforcement of the sabbath laws against Judeans and Tyrians, his indignation against the men who had married foreign wives, the expulsion of Jehoiada's son, and the purpose of his writing.

It is not Nehemiah's fault if we are still in doubt as to when he lived. He took pains to set down with accuracy the date of his departure from Susa. It was in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. There was no era by which to date. All his readers knew who Artaxerxes was. None of them could possibly know how many kings of that name there would be. It probably never occurred to Nehemiah that he ought to have stated whether there had been another king of the same name half a century before his time. The year was the important thing. In the original memoirs he probably stated more clearly than the present excerpts show whether his second visit was in the thirty-second year or later.

Artaxerxes III. Ochus (358-338) did not reign long enough to be considered. Artaxerxes I. Longimanus (464-424) has generally been regarded as Nehemiah's patron. The chief

argument in favor of this view is drawn from the succession of high priests. Eliashib, the contemporary of Nehemiah, was, according to Neh. 12: 10, a grandson of Joshua. But Joshua was the companion of Zerubbabel in the days of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis. This would prevent us from going so far down as into the fourth century, and render 445 B. C. a more probable date than 385 B. C. for Nehemiah's first arrival in Jerusalem. Another argument is derived from the supposed identity of Nehemiah's Artaxerxes with the Artaxerxes of the Aramaic source, Ezra, chap. 4. The editor of this document, at any rate, seems to have regarded Artaxerxes as following Xerxes and preceding Darius, evidently thinking of Darius II. Nothus, whom he confused with Darius I. The only Artaxerxes who preceded Darius Nothus was the king surnamed Longimanus.

But it is extremely doubtful whether we possess a complete list of the high priests of the Persian period. Neh. 12: 10 mentions Jonathan, but not Johanan, while Neh. 12: 22 mentions Johanan, but not Jonathan. Josephus² is probably right in stating that Johanan was Joiada's brother, succeeding Jonathan, Joiada's son. If one or the other of these high priests who lived nearer to the chronicler's time was omitted in the lists he used, we have certainly no guarantee for the completeness of these lists for more remote periods. It is not without its significance that Neh. 12: 22 distinctly declares that the heads of the families and the priests were written down in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, unto the reign of Darius, the Persian. The claim does not ascend higher than Eliashib. Eliashib's father, Joiakim, and his grandfather, Joshua, may have been known without written lists. But what warrants us in assuming that this Joshua was identical with the priest mentioned by Zechariah? In a work where Darius Hystaspis and Darius Nothus are fused into one historical personality it would not be strange if a Joshua living in the reign of the latter should have been merged into the larger figure of the Joshua known by Zechariah's prophecies as a contemporary of Darius

² *Antiquities*, XI, 297.

Hystaspis. There is nothing that necessitates the assumption that Nehemiah's sovereign was the Artaxerxes to whom Ezra, chap. 4, introduces us. There is much that militates against this identification. Kent³ thinks that the work of rebuilding the wall was actually interrupted by order of the same king who gave Nehemiah permission to build, but not until the work had practically been completed, and that therefore Nehemiah did not consider the incident worth recording. It may be permitted to question whether the writer of Ezra, chap. 4, would have cared to tell his tale of woe, had he known that all it amounted to was that the building was stopped by royal decree when it was already done. He evidently wanted to show why the wall had not been built before. There must have been some machinations of Persian officials at Samaria, and a royal decree. His Artaxerxes undoubtedly is Longimanus. But his *dramatis personæ* are not found in Nehemiah's time.

On the contrary, there are weighty reasons for supposing that Nehemiah lived in the reign of Artaxerxes II. Mnemon (404-358). The natural starting-point in any historical investigation is the lower limit, the later date. According to Neh. 12:22, Jaddua was a contemporary of Darius the Persian. It is universally acknowledged that this is Darius III. Codomannus (336-330). Josephus⁴ makes him a contemporary of Alexander, and while his story manifestly has many unhistorical embellishments, there is no real ground for doubting his knowledge of who the high priest was in the days of Alexander. Jaddua's predecessor was Johanan, Eliashib's son, Joiada's brother, who succeeded Jonathan, Joiada's son.⁵ This Jonathan murdered his brother Joshua. His other brother, Manasseh, had been driven away by Nehemiah, after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, while Joiada was high priest.⁶ Nehemiah knew a son of Joiada as a married man, and probably as a father. Joiada's grandson, Jaddua, cannot, therefore, have been born long after Nehemiah's

³ C. F. KENT, *A History of the Jewish People* (New York, 1899), p. 178.

⁴ *Antiquities*, XI, 302 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XI, 297.

⁶ Neh. 13:28.

time. This is all comprehensible if the famous cup-bearer lived in the time of Artaxerxes II. Mnemon. The list of high priests, with their approximate dates, would then be as follows :

Joshua, 520-516 B. C., reign of Darius I. (521-485).

Joshua, reign of Darius II. (424-404).

Joiakim, beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes II. (404-358).

Eliashib, reign of Artaxerxes II. (404-358).

Joiada, end of the reign of Artaxerxes II. (404-358).

Jonathan, reign of Artaxerxes III. (358-338).

Johanan, reigns of Artaxerxes III. and Arsēs (338-336).

Jaddua, reigns of Darius III. (336-330) and Alexander.

If Jaddua was born *ca.* 373, he could easily be a high priest in the time of Darius III. and Alexander. If he was born *ca.* 433, that would be impossible.

Sanballat's daughter, Nikaso, was the wife of Manasseh when he was driven away by Nehemiah. If this took place *ca.* 373 B. C., Sanballat may have lived into the reign of Darius III., when possibly for the first time it was seriously considered to build a large temple on Gerizim.⁷ This would, of course, be impossible, had he been an active opponent of Nehemiah already in 458 B. C.

Ktesias informs us that the butler's office was given to eunuchs—consequently open to foreigners—in the time of Mnemon. In earlier times it was an honor accorded to Persian nobles.⁸ Nehemiah may have been a eunuch.

We may conclude that Nehemiah's first journey to Jerusalem took place in the year 385 B. C.

The occasion that led him to undertake this journey was a visit from his brother Hanani and some other Judeans. The conversation between the two brothers is profoundly significant. Nehemiah asks "concerning the Jews that had escaped, remaining behind when the exiles were carried away," and Hanani answers that "the survivors left in the province after the exile are in a miserable plight and objects of reproach, seeing that the

⁷ JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, XI, 321.

⁸ Cf. J. MARQUART, in *Philologus*, Vol. LV, p. 232.

walls of Jerusalem are broken down and the gates gone, having been destroyed by fire." Neither Nehemiah nor Hanani, who has just returned from Jerusalem, knows of any other Jewish community in Palestine than that remaining in the land after the catastrophe of 586 B. C. The later story-teller to whom we owe Jer., chaps. 40-44, marches the whole "remnant of Israel" into Egypt, but the remnants of earlier settings of his stirring tales have played sad havoc with the much-vaunted lifelikeness of his sketches.⁹ The chronicler sends a whole army of exiles, headed by thousands of priests, back to Judea to occupy cities whose entire population he evidently regards as having been carried away, much after the fashion of the occupation of Canaan under Joshua after the extermination of the natives that the priestly writer describes. Prophecies attached to the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah must, of course, be fulfilled. Of such apologetic fancies Nehemiah knows nothing. He is not even aware of any recent return of exiles led by Ezra, "with the law of God in his hand." The community of Jews left in the province after the exile lives in wretchedness and dishonor. A cause of this is the condition of the walls and the gates. These have never been rebuilt. They are as Nebuchadnezzar left them. This is the natural inference. There is no intimation that a more recent destruction is meant. Nor is there anything to suggest that an attempt had been made to rebuild, but that it had been stopped by royal order.

Having obtained leave of absence for a time and letters to the governors of Trans-Euphratene and the keeper of the king's forest, Nehemiah set out with a military escort. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem he personally inspected the wall, and then revealed his project to the priests and the nobles. As soon as the work began, however, difficulties arose. Three powerful opponents appeared: Sanballat, Tobia, and Gashmu. Sanballat, the Horonite, was probably a native of Horonaim,¹⁰ and consequently a Moabite. Considering the long period during which southern Syria was a Chaldean province, the presence of

⁹ Cf. my article on "Jeremiah" in BLACK'S *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

¹⁰ Isa. 15:5.

Babylonian names in Moabitis and Judea is not strange. Names of foreign divinities were changed in pronunciation. The exception is rare. Whether Sanballat had anything to do with Samaria is doubtful. Even in Neh. 3:34 (in Eng. 4:2) he and his kinsmen are clearly distinguished from the Samaritan army, as Winckler has pointed out.¹¹ Kosters assumes that "his brothers" has the meaning of "his fellow-officials" and declares that Sanballat was the commander in the name of the king of the army of Samaria.¹² There seems to be nothing to support either of these assumptions. How is Nehemiah supposed to have obtained a report of this strange harangue to an army? And what is Sanballat supposed to mean by his question, "Will they sacrifice"? The author of Neh. 3:33-38 appears to have confused the building of the temple and the repairing of the wall as effectively as the writer of Ezra, chap. 4. From the later point of view the Samaritans could not be missed in the background.

Tobia was an Ammonite. Whether he is called "slave" or "servant" to characterize him as a government official, or to stigmatize him as a man of low origin, is not clear. Gashmu, the Arab, was probably a Nabatean chief in Seir or the Negeb. The opponents of Nehemiah are Moabites, Ammonites, Nabateans, and Ashdodites—powerful representatives of the territories and ethnic elements that for centuries had been hostile to Judah. Precisely what their position may have been in their native lands, we do not know. Their connubial, commercial, and political relations in Judea sufficiently explain their occasional presence in or near Jerusalem.

There is no intimation that these men ever sent any troops against Jerusalem, or attempted forcibly to interrupt the work. We are told that Nehemiah feared an attack and took all possible precautions against a surprise, setting himself a good example of watchfulness and courage. It was a mere rumor that armed the workers on the wall, though with less resoluteness on the

¹¹ HUGO WINCKLER, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, zweite Reihe, Bd. II, i (Leipzig, 1899), p. 230.

¹² *Het Oude Testament*, p. 1057.

part of their leader it might readily have become something worse. What actually happened was that Sanballat and Gashmu requested an interview with Nehemiah at Chephirah, in the valley of Ono. Sanballat's letter is no doubt genuine, though it may have been quoted in the memoirs freely from memory. It is not impossible that Sanballat and Gashmu knew the feeling in the city better than Nehemiah did, sincerely believed that he planned to make Jerusalem independent and himself favored the prophetic enthusiasm that gathered about his name, and therefore sought to make a deal with him.¹³ Cheyne is probably right in thinking that Sanballat's statement concerning the prophets was not pure fiction, but sufficiently based on fact to give excuse for the misrepresentation. Nehemiah, however, thought that they meant to do him mischief, and declined the invitation.

It is easier to infer from the memoirs what the attitude of the priestly class was than to gather from them what were the real feelings of the prophetic guilds. One cannot quite escape the impression that the doughty leader had many admirers among these men of the spirit. He may not have known it himself, and yet Sanballat's testimony may be true that prophets were hailing him as the coming king of Judah, as they once had done with Zerubbabel. One of them, Shemaiah b. Delaiah b. Mehetabeel, whom he consulted in his house, seems to have feared for his life and given him an oracle advising him to seek refuge in the sanctuary. If the Priests' Code had been known to these men, it is not probable that Shemaiah would have given such advice, whether with good intent or evil. A man with the shrewdness credited to him by Nehemiah would not have been foolish enough to counsel downright defiance of the law. Nor is it likely that Nehemiah thought of Numb. 18:7 and at once perceived the prophet's villainy. He felt that it would be cowardly for a man in his position to hide himself, and had a superstitious dread of nearness to the adytum. As his abhorrence of the project grew, his suspicions were aroused, and he finally charged the prophet, who may have been altogether friendly, with an attempt to ruin

¹³ T. K. CHEYNE, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile* (New York, 1898), pp. 46 ff.

him. What the prophetess Noadjah said or did to excite his indignation, we do not know.

That there was no love lost between Nehemiah and the priestly class is manifest. They may have had no objections to the reparation of the walls, and may even have lent a hand in this undertaking. But the gratuitous insults to their kinsmen were not easily forgiven, and the presence of a strong representative of the Persian government, though of their own race, could not be favorable to their ambitions. Winckler¹⁴ possibly goes too far in thinking of a consolidation of priestly interests within the Achæmenian empire in conscious conflict with the secular power. Religious prejudices were probably too marked for that. But the ambitions of the hierarchy, whatever its traditions, directly or indirectly to rule in the name of the deity, must certainly be considered. Though we naturally wonder how Nehemiah could know the contents of letters that passed between Tobia and his relatives in Jerusalem, it is easy to believe that in this case his suspicions were well founded.

Another source of internal dissension was the condition of the laboring people. A *corvée* of peasants had been drafted for the work. Leaving their farms and finding the food supply in the city insufficient, they were facing starvation with their families. The prevailing distress gave the rich Jew an opportunity for profitable business transactions. He was willing to take mortgages on farms and vineyards for ready cash that vanished quickly in a time of famine prices. He was easily persuaded to lend to the poor, against good security, that they might be able to pay their royal taxes. But as he favored punctuality in the payment of all obligations, even those to himself, sons and daughters had to be sold into slavery. Deprived of his land, disfranchised as a citizen, without bread for hungry mouths, pitted between money-lender and tax-gatherer, the poor farmer could not see that he had gained much by the transaction. Not understanding the sacredness of economic law, and sufficiently unsophisticated to imagine that religion ought to have

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 224, 226.

something to do with business, he complained that "Jewish brethren," men of the same faith, should be his oppressors.

Nehemiah took his time to consider this situation, and finally called the aristocracy together, inquiring of them if they really demanded payment of debts at such a time. They must have answered that business was business; for he soon called a general town meeting, at which he finely contrasted the readiness of the Jews in Persia to buy the freedom of such of their co-religionists as were unfortunate enough to be slaves in heathen households with the cruel selfishness of the capitalists in Jerusalem, who were willing to buy and own as slaves the sons and daughters of their poorer Jewish brethren. None was foolish enough to speak in defense. But several well-to-do citizens generously promised that the farmers would have the use of their fields and vineyards, and that they would not demand payment of interest for the time being. This they took an oath to do. How well they kept it we do not know. It is a relief not to be told. Pious men of wealth do not object to sermons on clemency and charity, or to giving assurances that they will be merciful. Such discourses are gratifying to their pride; such loud amens are satisfying to conscience. Nehemiah tells us how good he was, and wants his god to be sure not to forget it.

After fifty-two days of work, on the 25th of Elul, probably in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, or 385 B. C., the reparation of the wall was completed. Whether Nehemiah returned at once to Susa when the work was done, or remained as governor for twelve years, is not certain. It is not likely that when Artaxerxes eagerly asked his favorite how long the journey would last, and how soon he could be back again, he requested a leave of absence for twelve years. The indefinite expression "a set time"¹⁵ looks suspicious, as if it had been tampered with by some editor in the interest of harmonization. There is no mention in connection with the firman of gubernatorial powers. Chap. 5:14 ff. may have been retouched on the basis of 13:6, and this verse afterward given its present awkward form. A longer time's absence seems to be presupposed in 13:4 ff.

¹⁵ Neh. 2:6.

On his return to Jerusalem, in 373 B. C. or later, Nehemiah found that a large hall, formerly used for storing the gifts intended for Levites, singers, and doorkeepers, had been furnished as a guest-chamber for Tobia, and that these subordinate officials, not receiving any share of the revenues of the temple, had retired to their farms in the country. It would be interesting to know whether religious differences played any part in the conflicts between the higher and the lower clerus, and what expression the religious life of the latter class took in places that had once been centers of worship. Nehemiah had Tobia's furniture thrown out, reëstablished the Levites, and provided for their support.

Away from Yahweh's land and from any recognized sanctuary, the exiles had generally abstained from offering sacrifices, except on their pilgrimages to the holy city. All the more importance was attached to those signs of the Yahweh-worship that were everywhere applicable. Circumcision and sabbath-keeping were no doubt regarded as more important in the circles in which Nehemiah had been brought up than in Judea. A fragment cut loose from the national life and maintaining itself as a cult-community solely in a different social *milieu* almost invariably is characterized by a certain exclusiveness, a love for tradition, and a tendency to formalism. Probably every Jew in Susa would have felt just as Nehemiah did in regard to the necessity of keeping off aliens and of rigorously observing the sabbath. Possibly the Jews of his acquaintance in Persia were not farmers or owners of vineyards tempted to continue the harvest even through the sabbath. At any rate, the people about Jerusalem made hay while the sun shone, even if it happened to be a sabbath, and the Tyrian merchants, who probably had no reason for regarding that particular day as sacred, sold their dry fish whenever the natives would buy. This naturally horrified Nehemiah, and he put a stop to it.

Even in a foreign land, where as the king's cup-bearer he was obliged to use the Persian language and as an official necessarily must know the Aramaic, he had not failed to acquire the speech of his fathers. All the more did it distress him to observe how

in Judea the sacred tongue was losing ground. Owing to intermarriages with women of Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon, many children of Jewish fathers no longer spoke Hebrew, but presumably the Aramaic dialects of their mothers. So great was his indignation against these men that he cursed them, beat them, plucked off their hair, and made them swear not to marry their sons or daughters to foreigners. It is significant that he did not require them to send away their wives. He was evidently angry enough to propose the worst punishment he could think of. But if ever such a demand was really made, it was by another man, at a later time. Even this is extremely doubtful. Had he known anything about the love of man and woman, he might not have used his fists so fiercely. But he was probably a eunuch. He was more concerned about the future of the Jewish race than about the happiness of individuals. From his point of view he was undoubtedly right. It should be observed that polygamy is not yet condemned. That Joiada's son was driven away may not be a sign of the impartiality with which he carried through his reforms. He had special quarrels with the high-priestly family.

The character of Nehemiah stands out in bold relief. He is a man of affairs, and has the virtues and the defects of a practical politician. There is nothing of the idealist in him. In their splendid reliance on Yahweh, prophets had scorned to consider their military strength. Even Zechariah would have no walls to a city where Yahweh dwelt. Nehemiah knew the value of walls and gates, and was armed day and night. Men of the spirit had looked with contempt on sacrifices and holy days and petty national exclusiveness, dreaming of an Israel that should, through its sufferings and its knowledge, become a light to the nations. The temple cult, the sabbath, circumcision, the separation of the chosen seed, were to Nehemiah of greatest importance. Yet he knew his ends and worked for them indefatigably. He was faithful to his convictions. He was bold, courageous, enterprising, cautious, circumspect, and shrewd. He had a keen sense of justice and sympathy with the oppressed of his race, and his palliative measures may have done something for

immediate relief, though he lacked the prophetic sense of social injustice. He flattered himself with knowing men, though there is ground for thinking that he read their characters largely through his suspicions, and he manifestly took some pride in his ability to escape their wicked wiles. He felt in all sincerity that he was a pious man, and looked with some anxiety for the reward. He stood alone.

His influence was great. The walls he built became, as Sanballat surmised, a means of developing independence and stirring up rebellion. Without them there would probably have been no revolt under Ochus and no "third captivity" to Hyrcania. Two centuries later the sabbath observance for which he contended had taken such root in the national life that Judean peasants were willing to be slain rather than to take up arms on the sacred days. The Aramaic could not be prevented from becoming the vernacular of the people, but the language in which Nehemiah wrote his memoirs continued to be cultivated after Aramaic had had its day. The particularism he helped to foster made and unmade Judaism. The man he drove from the holy precincts gave a fresh impulse to the Shechemite community and sent a parallel stream of religious life down the centuries. The love he bore for Jerusalem caused poets to sing, martyrs to confess, patriots to die, saints to aspire, scholars to investigate, and one of the great religions of the world to live, in spite of fiercest persecution, for the ultimate blessing of mankind.